

Get to
know the

i-codes

This is the fourth in a series of publications exploring the differences between the Uniform and International Codes (I-Codes). Topics covered in the series include means of egress, building uses, heights and areas, types of construction, fire-resistance-rated assemblies, accessibility, structural provisions, and the residential and mechanical codes. Additional topics may be added in 2004.

Introducing the IRC

About the Codes

The 2003 editions of the International Building, Residential, Mechanical and Fire Codes (I-Codes) replaced the Uniform Codes in Seattle on Aug. 15, 2004*.

Copies can be purchased from the Public Resource Center (PRC), 20th floor, Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Ave., (206) 684-8467, or:

- WA Assn. of Building Officials
(360) 586-6725, www.wabo.org
- International Code Council (ICC)
(800) 284-4406, www.iccsafe.org

— I-Codes Training

I-Code trainings are offered by the following organizations:

- WA Assn. of Building Officials
(360) 586-6725, www.wabo.org
- International Code Council
(800) 284-4406, www.iccsafe.org
- American Inst. of Architects-Seattle, (206) 448-4938
www.aiaseattle.org
- Structural Engineers Assn. of WA
(206) 682-6026, www.seaw.org
- Building Industry Assn. of WA
(360) 352-7800, www.biaw.com
- Master Builders Assn. of King & Snohomish Counties
(425) 451-7920, www.mba-ks.com

— Technical Code Support

- Building Code
(206) 684-4630
Hours: M-F, 1 p.m.-4:15 p.m.
- Electrical Code
(206) 684-5383
Hours: M/W/F, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Tu/Th, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
- Energy/Mechanical Code
(206) 684-7846
Hours: M-F, 1 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

New Residential Building Code for Seattle

Seattle is expecting a new addition to the family of codes—the International Residential Code (IRC). The IRC will apply to single-family residences, duplexes and townhouses not more than three stories in height. It will also apply to structures accessory to these residences. Buildings more than three stories, whether townhouses, single-family residences or duplexes, will be subject to the International Building Code (IBC). DPD will also allow applicants to choose to use the IBC as an alternative to the IRC.

The IRC contains complete provisions for residential construction. It has chapters on foundations, walls, floors, roofs, mechanical equipment, plumbing, electrical and energy conservation. However, in Seattle and Washington, the chapters on plumbing, electrical and energy conservation will not be in effect. The State plumbing, electrical and energy codes will continue to apply to residential buildings.

The IRC was developed with extensive participation by the National Association of Home Builders, so it is very oriented to the needs of the residential market. It is a prescriptive code that includes many drawings of construction details. For example, Figure R505.3 illustrates steel floor construction, showing the maximum header span, blocking, strapping, maximum cantilever and other details. The seismic design provisions are limited in scope, similar to the current Uniform Building Code (UBC) provisions for “conventional construction.” Engineered structures will be required to conform to the IBC.

Most of the construction requirements in the IRC are very similar to what is currently required by the Seattle Building Code (SBC). There are a few differences. For instance, self-closing hardware will not be required on the doors between garages and houses. Handrails will only be required for stairways that have four or more risers, compared to the SBC, which requires handrails for stairways with two or more risers. A more significant change is that stairways with eight-inch rise and nine-inch treads are not allowed in the IRC or the IBC.



Developed with the help of builders, the IRC is very oriented to the needs of the residential marketplace.



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Visit DPD's new
Technical Codes website:
**[www.seattle.gov/
dpd/techcodes](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/techcodes)**